Investigating Issues in Local Communities

Unit by Stephanie King, part of the 2023-2024 Pulitzer Center Teacher Fellowship



Dalia:

My experience with underreported stories was very eye opening. It gave me an insight into what goes on in our communities that we don't hear about. It also allowed me to become familiar with the journalists process of researching, interviewing and writing about specific stories, especially those that don't get shared out. I learned how to word things in a way that my audience would respond better, how to professionally conduct interviews and how surveys help in your writing. All this helped me in the process of writing my own underreported story, which I chose to do on the underage or unlicensed driving that occurs in our communities. The process of getting information for my story was not the easiest, I had multiple people not respond but ultimately it was just another insight into how journalists in the real world also struggle. This was proven again in my Zoom call with the reporter because she too shared the difficulties of trying to write a story. I also learned the importance of getting those stories out so people are aware of what's happening without our knowledge.

Eden:

The pulitzer underreported stories lesson showed me the impact that stories that people overlook are often the ones that have the most impact. They taught me that the underreported stories are the ones that deserve the most attention in order to get them the recognition and help them in their cause and or their situation. The zoom call with the reporter allowed me to gain a different perspective in these stories and better understand the emotions that documenting these hardships can impose on the reporter. It could accuse a sense of wanting to help and better the person's life after finding out they don't deserve to live the way they do. I think underreported stories are important because they allow us to see the world in a different light and allow awareness to harmful topics that the mainstream media doesn't follow.

Eveny:

While writing my underreported story I learned many things that I would've never thought about. Doing my research and interviewing people really opened my eyes to the importance of my topic. I interviewed Daisy Lopez, a granger school district counselor and she explained to me her experiences with illiteracy problems that she faces with working at school. She explained how parents have had troubles signing papers and even speaking in English to her and are embarrassed about it. This became very important to me because I know about more than half our population in Granger are hispanic and speak spanish. I believe the Zoom call with the reporter was useful because we learned what she goes through and does as a journalist and we learned her strategies with interviewing people. I learned from her that when interviewing it is important to make sure the interviewee is comfortable enough to share everything with you.

Anonymous student:

I think the zoom call with the reporter was very interesting and entertaining to listen to. It was nice that we got to ask questions at the end of the zoom meeting about the articles they publish. I know that the zoom call



impacted people because there are many people including myself who's parents crossed the border illegally from Mexico to America to better their lives for themselves and their families. Many people don't bring to light the amount of people trying to cross the border to better their lives, and that is why I think the underreported stories are really impactful. They are different from everyone else's because not many people see articles written about that everyday so when people see them it interests them more. Underreported stories bring light to problems that have yet to be solved and no one pays attention to, it helps the people of America realize that the immigrants just want to better their lives just as much as most of us do. I believe the zoom call was very impactful and maybe next time they should come in person, and they should continue to do the stories because they impact people more than they think.

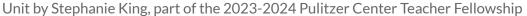
Adrian:

In doing the Pulitzer underreported stories, I have been able to learn about my community and the underlying issues that face it. Many of the stories that would capture people's attention are not presented to the public and are often hidden as they are not viewed as important compared to other stories. These stories should not be kept hidden just because they are deemed less important, they can shed light on the importance facing the community that could help it if they are brought to light. In learning about this, I began to start doing my own research and looking into issues that I felt were not covered enough. I have learned that there are many more issues than I realized that are not being properly put out to the public and informed. I did my story on the ease of access to alcohol in the community. I chose to write my story on this topic because throughout my time in the halls and from friends I have heard them talk about drinking and how easy it was to get their hands on it, I wanted to bring this story to light as I felt there was not enough coverage since the school is in a low income area. I thought that the zoom meeting with the interview was

Amy:

Something that I learned while learning about all these underreported stories is there are a lot of things that people don't shine light on and go very unheard of. Pulitzer has done such a great job with writing these stories to try and inform people on these issues to help people. I think the zoom call was very interesting and informative. I really enjoyed speaking to Pulitzer and learning about why she chooses to do what she does and what she has learned from all these underreported stories as well as what has influenced her to write about

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these issues. These stories are important for people to learn them since people are hearing about these things and it would be a way to help others if people were enlightened on these topics.

Estrella:

In the Pulitzer interview I learned a lot. I learned that there is more planning writing than we think. Before the meeting I thought being a reporter is just talking about what you see or have experienced while being there. I was incorrect, she had to write about how the children were impacted and looked for the solutions to fix the problem. Under reported stories are a big deal. People may not talk about these topics which make them under-reported but she tries her best to spread the word and help these people. I enjoyed the zoom call. It was very entertaining listening to her talk about all her experiences and what she learned.

Anonymous student:

There are many parts it takes to write an underreported story. I was not aware of this before. The surveys conducted, the interviews, and the writing process all contributed to the story I covered. My topic was on racial discrimination in Granger High School, in which I interviewed vice principal, Ms. Maldonado. The reason for this was because I was aware of the bullying that was happening with some cousins of mine who came from Mexico to the United States. They're enrolled in Granger High School and often tell me about the discrimination they have to face from people at school. This was a shock to me considering the fact that our high school consists mainly of Mexican American students. So when Ms. King introduced the underreported assignment to my class, I immediately knew what it was going to be about. I had never interviewed anyone before so I had to research how to properly interview people and know which questions were the important questions to ask.

Anonymous student:

The underreported stories lesson was really enlightening. It allowed me to learn about situations I had no idea to even think about. This lesson helped me learn about big impacts on people in the valley, and there's no recognition. My story was based on killings in the lower valley. This topic caught my attention because there are so many killings in the lower valley, that we're just used to it. You don't see those kinds of things on the news, they're just brushed off. I thought the zoom call with the reporter was very educational, we learned about her experiences and it was really interesting to see how she was able to go out there and make her dream happen. She's helped small places with big situations get lots of recognition like they should. Underreported stories are important because they're just like any other story that makes the news. Just because it's in a small valley, doesn't mean it's irrelevant.